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**International Meeting – OMPI – Italy  
On the Intellectual property and the Competitiveness of the  
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**

Organized by the  
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and  
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**Speech**

**President Antonio Marzano**

One of the most used expressions to define the times we live in, is that this is the “knowledge society”.

We know that also in other historical ages they boasted of being part of a knowledge society. Perhaps two hundred thousand years ago the *homo sapiens* thought more or less. And from then to now, whoever among us has ever visited a museum dedicated to the history of man could have surely observed, through the tools utilized by our ancestors and through the outputs used in their daily life, that the progress of knowledge has continuously affected men’s life and productivity. All this occurred with different paces and speeds, depending on the age; and for sure from the industrial revolution on, this pace has shown an almost continuous acceleration. All this means that the history of man may be also interpreted as the history of ideas: after all the progress of knowledge is the progress of ideas.

I would like to prevent the objections of the skeptical very soon. The progress of knowledge is not necessarily the progress of the human wisdom: the great number of tragedies, wars, persecutions and discriminations proves this. And unfortunately, one should admit that sometimes the progress of knowledge has also been utilized to invent more powerful weapons used to kill rather than to improve humanity’s well-being. Today we will deal with how favoring and defending ideas useful for men, for their health, for their life quality, for the economic progress, that is to say, for the human well-being.

We are not able to explain the mystery of ideas yet, namely how an idea arises; what are the mechanisms of the human mind, what are the favourable conditions? This

remains quite mysterious, in fact when we want to indicate the arise of an idea we often refer to it as an enlightenment. On the other hand we know more about the effects of ideas on the economy, and thanks to the social sciences, on the functioning of society itself. In the framework of this international conference economy is what interests us more. It is by now ascertained that when one builds a so called production function (that is when one studies the variables affecting the production level) it is no longer enough to put in the capital, the earth, the work, the entrepreneurs' skills -all important things for sure- but it is also necessary to put ideas in. Let's call it human capital, scientific progress, technology or technical-scientific progress. At the end of the day, it is nothing but ideas.

What can be produced that is not produced yet, how to produce it better than how it is already done, by means of which technologies that could be better than the ones used so far. All this is the result of "new ideas".

And it is just their materialization that one can find in the showcases of the museums dedicated to the world history, or in the drawings, in the materials of Leonardo, Galilei or Marconi and many other inventors, discoverers, mentors who gave us the economic progress. And how would it be possible not to include among the revolutionary turning points and the great inventions the machines that have allowed the reduction of man's toil, the cures contributing to defeat diseases and pain, the treatment to lengthen men's life expectancy –from 30 years in the ancient Rome to over seventy of today's man..

But the artistic production itself, the Renaissance, the Impressionism, the Modern Art, from which sometimes even the *Made in* derives, contributing to the life quality, is the result of new ideas.

Thanks to this, men can go beyond “the essential”, give to themselves something more than the essential, that is something more than a club, a flint, an animal skin to protect themselves from cold or a rudimental hut.

Why protecting “new ideas”?

For many reasons, that are not a recent discovery. See the announcement made by the Republic of Venice, going back to 1474 and today projected on the screen.

Probably it was Venice itself to establish an office for the intellectual protection or the first patent and trademark office for the first time.

Because five centuries ago they had already thought they had to protect various ingenious works and artworks of men that will find and do things, that will be somehow useful and good for our state “*varij ingegnosi artificij, le opere et artifici di homeni exercitariano l’ingegno, troveriano, et fariano dele cosse, che sariano de non piccola utilità et beneficio al stado nostro*”?

Why do we also intend to do the same thing after five hundreds years? First of all because inventing is expensive and if we do not grant an earning for that cost for an adequate time period, we discourage the innovation activity.

In the second place because the analysis on the production function, as I reminded before, shows that the economic development depends on the technological and product innovation more than ever.

Thirdly, because the “idea theft”, namely counterfaction, is not less serious than theft of material assets, strangely we tend to condemn more the theft of material assets than the idea theft.

Fourthly, because copying ideas, producing counterfeited assets is an act of illegal competition.

Fifthly, because we may have doubts about the existence of the Keynesian multiplier, but in my opinion we should surely maintain that the idea multiplier does exist: ideas come from other ideas. For example Marconi, whose centenary of the Nobel Prize Award we celebrate tomorrow, gave way to an idea chain leading to the ICT.

Sixth reason, because the economic creativity is the only important natural resource in many Countries with no raw materials.

Seventh and not last reason, because especially the SMEs, that are small for the size of their capital and for the number of employees, are and can be considered big for the ideas enriching their activities, granting their affirmation on the market and favoring their growth in size.

For all these reasons that are no less than seven, I apologize for the self-quotation, as a Minister, I have enacted the Industrial Property Code, I have introduced sanctions against counterfaction, I proposed the unification of the product certification systems in a single Body, I made agreements and treaties with countries such as France and China. These are my convictions on which I discussed with the World Intellectual Property Organization, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and with the Minister of Economic Development and together we have followed those convictions with the conference of today.

